

EXAMINATIONS FOR PROMOTION IN THE MEDICAL CORPS OF THE NAVY.

JANUARY 20, 1897.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. HALL, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, submitted the
following

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 1296.]

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred Senate bill No. 1296, report it back with the recommendation that it be passed; and the committee hereby adopts the Senate report on said bill, which is as follows:

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the above Senate bill, report it back with the recommendation that it be passed.

The bill has the approval of the honorable Secretary of the Navy, who states in an official communication to this committee that its adoption will tend to promote the efficiency of the Medical Corps of the Navy. The bill has also the support of the Surgeon-General of the Navy, who states that the defective system acting so injuriously to the interests of the Naval Medical Corps should be remedied as soon as possible.

The bill provides for examinations for promotion, which are deemed by the Secretary of War essential to the efficiency of the Naval Medical Corps. Applicants for the position of assistant surgeon are obliged now to pass a rigid examination, and in about three years after entering service they are subjected to a second, previous to admittance to the rank of passed assistants. They are not subjected to another examination for a period which averages thirty-one years, including promotion, and no effort is made to ascertain their physical, mental, or professional qualifications for advancement until they come up for promotion to the grade of medical inspector.

There seems to be no good reason why medical officers should not be regularly commissioned on reaching the grade of passed assistant surgeons, and be required to show their fitness for advancement to the grade of surgeon. The bill herewith presented provides for the establishment of the grade of passed assistant surgeon and for the examination of officers in such grade before their promotion to that of surgeon.

The Surgeon-General of the Navy, in his annual reports for the past three years, has set forth arguments and facts relating to the necessity for the examination of passed assistant surgeons preliminary to their promotion to the grade of surgeon. He states that under existing laws passed assistant surgeons are not commissioned and are not required to pass the usual physical and professional examinations prior to their promotion to the grade of surgeon. This, he says, is most harmful to the Medical Corps and to the service at large.

Passed assistant surgeons, under the present law, remain in that grade for a period not less than fifteen years, and then without either professional or physical examination are promoted to surgeon, in which rank they remain fully as long before they are examined for the next grade of medical inspector.

The Surgeon-General therefore recommends that all assistant surgeons, when examined and found qualified for promotion to the grade of passed assistant surgeon, be commissioned in that grade, and be required to pass a further examination prior to promotion to the grade of surgeon.

The bill herewith returned provides for such examination and commission, and as it is clearly in the interest of the medical service of the Navy, your committee recommend that it be passed.